

IN THE CLAIMS

Page 34 of the original specification was submitted in error. It contains the same claims as on page 35.

The following is a complete listing of revised claims with a status identifier in parenthesis.

LISTING OF CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A system comprising:
~~a first type of network element (NE) comprising;~~
~~a port for connection to another network element, the port configured to support at least one transport level overhead message[[:]]~~ wherein the first type of NE is configured to:
~~means for determining whether the network element is a leader or non-leader NE; and an out of band channel for communication with one or more network elements, the out of band channel configured to transmit a request for port identification to one of a plurality of second type of NEs, and to receive a request for port identification from one of a plurality of the second type of NEs, the port further configured to and transmit a port detection signal in response to the received port identification cooperation with the request for port identification transmitted through the~~ wherein each of the requests and detection signal is transferred over an out of band channel.
2. (Currently Amended) The [[NE]] system of claim 1 wherein the first type of NE out-of-band channel is further configured to transmit the request for port identification to another NE if the NE is not a first type of leader NE.

3. (Currently Amended) The [[NE]] system of claim 1 further comprising a first type of leader NE ~~a port identification request queue and wherein the NE is configured to place a request for port identification in [[the]] a queue.~~

4. (Currently Amended) The [[NE]] system of claim 3 wherein the first type of leader NE is further configured to accept port identification requests from other first type of non-leader NEs and place them in the queue ~~if the NE is a leader NE.~~

5. (Cancelled)

6. (Cancelled)

7. (Currently Amended) The system [[NE]] of claim 1 wherein the first type of NE is a SONET NE.

8. (Currently Amended) The system [[NE]] of claim 1 wherein the first type of NE is an SDH NE.

9. (Currently Amended) The system [[NE]] of claim 1 wherein the first type of NE is a packet switching NE.

10. (Currently Amended) The system [[NE]] of claim 1 wherein the first type of NE is an ATM NE.

11. (Currently Amended) The system [[NE]] of claim 1 wherein the port detection signal is a SONET/SDH protection switching message.

12. (Currently Amended) The system [[NE]] of claim 1 wherein the first type of NE ~~network element~~ comprises a plurality of SONET/SDH ports and is further configured to poll responsive to the reception of a port detection signal

by polling a plurality of ports to detect which of the ports receives the port detection signal.

13. (Currently Amended) The system [[NE]] of claim 4 claim 1 wherein the network element first type of NE is further configured responsive to the detection of the port detection signal by storing the to store port binding information in response to the port detection signal.

14. (Currently Amended) The system [[NE]] of claim 4 claim 13 wherein the network element first type of NE is further configured to transmit responsive to the detection of the port detection signal by transmitting the port binding information to an associated, first type of leader NE.

15. (Currently Amended) A heterogenous telecommunication system comprising The system as in claim 1 further comprising:

a plurality of first and second type of NEs circuit switching network elements; and

— a plurality of packet switching network elements, each of the network elements NEs including:

— a port for connection to another network element, the port configured to support at least one transport level overhead message;

— means for determining whether the network element is a leader or non-leader NE; and an out of band channel for communication with one or more network elements, the out of band channel configured to transmit a request for port identification and to receive a request for port identification, the port

~~further configured to transmit a port detection signal in cooperation with the request for port identification transmitted through the out of band channel.~~

~~a port for connection to a first or second type of network element, the port configured to support at least one transport level overhead message wherein each NE is configured to:~~

~~transmit a request for port identification to one of a plurality of the first or second type of NE, receive a request for port identification from one of the plurality of the first or second type of NE, and transmit a port detection signal in response to the received port identification request wherein each of the requests and detection signal is transferred over an out of band channel.~~

16-28. (Cancelled)

29. (New) The system as in claim 1 wherein the first and second type of NE is selected from the group consisting of a circuit switched NE and a packet switched NE.

30. (New) A method comprising:

configuring a port of a first type of network element (NE) to support at least one transport level overhead message;

transmitting a request for port identification to one of a plurality of second type of NEs;

receiving a request for port identification from one of the plurality of the second type of NE; and

transmitting a port detection signal in response to the received port identification request wherein each of the requests and detection signal is transferred over an out of band channel.

31. (New) The method of claim 30 further comprising transmitting the request for port identification to a first type of leader NE.

32. (New) The method of claim 30 further comprising placing a request for port identification in a queue.

33. (New) The method of claim 32 further comprising accepting port identification requests from other first type of non-leader NEs and placing them in the queue.

34. (New) The method of claim 30 wherein the first type of NE is a SONET NE.

35. (New) The method of claim 30 wherein the first type of NE is an SDH NE.

36. (New) The method of claim 30 wherein the first type of NE is a packet switching NE.

37. (New) The method of claim 30 wherein the first type of NE is an ATM NE.

38. (New) The method of claim 30 wherein the port detection signal is a SONET/SDH protection switching message.

39. (New) The method of claim 30 wherein the first type of NE comprises a plurality of SONET/SDH ports, the method further comprising

polling a plurality of ports to detect which of the ports receives the port detection signal.

40. (New) The method of claim 30 further comprising storing port binding information in response to the port detection signal.

A2
41. (New) The method of claim 40 further comprising transmitting the port binding information to an associated, first type of leader NE.
